

***Response to Amendment***

The reply filed on December 21, 2007 is not fully responsive to the prior Office Action because of the following omission(s) or matter(s):

The reply filed on December 21, 2007 fails to reply to each and every ground of objection and rejection in the prior Office action. In particular, the objections previously made to claims 9 and 29 still have neither been corrected nor addressed. See page 2 of the Office action mailed October 3, 2006. The rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, to claim 29 also has not been addressed. See page 4 of the Office action mailed October 3, 2006. The reply does not appear to present any remarks specifically addressing the 35 USC 103 rejection of claims 1-8 and 23 based on Muellenberg in view of Geib (USP 6,361,243) nor the 35 USC 103 rejection of claims 11 and 12 based on Muellenberg in view of Stegman et al. (USP 5,308,183). Is it applicant's intended position that these rejections are not being separately argued because the propriety thereof is solely dependent upon whether or not claim 1 is anticipated by Muellenberg? Further, the reply has failed to present arguments pointing out the specific distinctions believed to render newly presented claims 31 and 32 patentable over the applied references. See 37 CFR 1.111(b). Is it applicant's position that these claims are only patentable by reason of their dependency from claims 24 and 1, respectively? Finally, it is noted that an interview was held November 1, 2006 and the interview summary form PTOL-413 for that interview was mailed on November 6, 2006. As indicated in the last paragraph of that form, the formal written reply to the October 3, 2006 Office action

must include a substance of the interview. No separate substance of this interview has been provided by applicant to date.

Since the above-mentioned reply appears to be *bona fide*, applicant is given **ONE (1) MONTH or THIRTY (30) DAYS** from the mailing date of this notice, whichever is longer, within which to supply the omission or correction in order to avoid abandonment. EXTENSIONS OF THIS TIME PERIOD MAY BE GRANTED UNDER 37 CFR 1.136(a).

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ERNESTO GARCIA whose telephone number is 571-272-7083. The examiner can normally be reached from 9:30-6:00. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached at 571-272-7087.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR.

Art Unit: 3679

Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/E. G./

Examiner, Art Unit 3679

March 28, 2008

/Daniel P. Stodola/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3679